

# HEALTHWISE



## Summertime Tips

- Talk to a Doctor or Pharmacist before starting any treatment!
- Never apply ointment, butter, or salve based treatments to a sunburn or open skin sore
- Local anesthetics (agents that prevent or stop pain) can make the skin very sensitive
- Chiggers may resemble scabies, but scabies make "tunnels" along the fingers or genital areas
- After being stung, remove the stinger and venom sac with a fingernail or credit card
- Call your Doctor or Pharmacist if your condition/injury is not healing within a week

## Summertime, and the Livin' is . . . Itchy!

After a long, frigid winter you might find yourself running outside at the first sign of warm weather. But be careful - insects and poison ivy can slow you down.

- You have a severe allergic reaction away from the bite/sting area of skin
- You have a family history of severe allergic reactions

### Insect Bites and Stings

As you begin spending more time outdoors, contact with insects and various bugs may become an issue. Bites and stings commonly cause a non-severe skin reaction or irritation, but they can also be life-threatening in people that are allergic or hypersensitive. All bites and stings should be investigated to find out which insect caused the skin reaction. All symptoms need to be watched closely. Avoid scratching due to the risk of causing an infection.

#### Biting Insects:

- Mosquitoes
- Fleas
- Bedbugs
- Ticks
- Chiggers
- Spiders

#### Stinging Insects:

- Bees
- Wasps
- Yellow Jackets
- Hornets

#### Get Medical Help If:

- You experience a severe reaction such as hives, excessive swelling, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, or weakness
- The bite/sting looks infected
- You are bit by a tick or spider
- You had a previous reaction to a sting or bite
- The person stung/bit is less than 2 years old

### Common Treatments

*(to be used for less than 7 days)*

- Immediate treatment - ice pack (10-minute intervals for stings)
- Topical pain relievers (e.g. benzocaine)
- Topical antihistamines (e.g. Benadryl)
- Counter-irritants (camphor, menthol)
- Hydrocortisone 0.5% or 1%
- Skin protectants (e.g. zinc oxide, calamine)
- Repellants (only for insects that bite)

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### Are you severely allergic to bee stings? Follow this sting prevention checklist:

- ✓ Keep an Epi-Pen on hand (check the expiration date)
- ✓ Avoid bright colored clothing
- ✓ Don't use scented lotions, perfumes/ colognes
- ✓ Keep picnic and garage areas free of "trash" odor
- ✓ Change clothing if fruit or food is spilled on it
- ✓ Keep your shoes on at all times
- ✓ Destroy nests of stinging insects near your home

# Summertime Itch, *continued*

## Poison Ivy

Poison ivy is a plant that causes millions of allergic skin reactions each year. These reactions commonly cause redness, swelling, itching, burning, stinging, blisters or streak formations where the plant oils touched the skin. As people get older they become less sensitive to poison ivy, but their symptoms may last much longer. It is important to protect the skin before exposing it to poison ivy, especially if a reaction occurred in the past.

### Get Medical Help If:

- A reaction causes extreme pain
- The eyelids or face swell or if large blisters/vesicles form
- Someone <2 years old is exposed
- Symptoms are present for more than 2 weeks

- The reaction covers over a quarter of the body surface
- You are unable to complete regular daily tasks.

### Preventing a Poison Ivy Reaction

- Avoid woody vine that has an almond-shaped leaf in “three’s”
- Remove poison ivy near the home (chemically or physically)
- Prior to potential exposure, apply protective lotion 15 minutes before (such as IvyBlock)
- Wear protective clothing and mask
- Remove all clothing worn or exposed and wash immediately, separate from other laundry
- Take a shower, not a bath, at earliest convenience and make sure to clean under fingernails

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## Over-the-Counter Help for Poison Ivy

DRUG CLASS	COMMON INGREDIENT	USED FOR	CONSIDERATIONS
<b>Corticosteroid, topical</b>	Hydrocortisone	Redness and swelling, itch relief	Do not use >7 days. Do not use on face. Not for children <2 years old.
<b>Antipruritics, topical</b>	Phenol, Camphor, Menthol	Pain and itch relief	Avoid applying to open wounds. May cause burning or irritation.
<b>Antihistamines, oral</b>	Diphenhydramine	Nighttime itch relief, sleep	Do not use topical antihistamines.
<b>Astringents</b>	Aluminum Acetate Zinc Oxide Zinc Acetate Sodium Bicarbonate Calamine Witch Hazel	Protectant, drying up wet wounds, decrease swelling, helps healing process	Often used as soaks or wet compress. Used for 5-7 days. Calamine or zinc oxide can lead to build-up on skin (regular cleansing advised).
<b>Bath Treatments</b>	Colloidal Oatmeal	Soothe wounds, itch relief	Caution - bathtub becomes extremely slippery.

## Helpful Websites

These websites can help you identify the sources of summertime skin irritations:

Spiders, ticks, etc.  
<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/slideshow-bad-bugs>

Poison Ivy  
<http://video.about.com/landscaping/How-to-Identify-Poison-Ivy.htm>